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REASONS

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For a Regular Re-Establishment of the

CORPORATION

O F

Shipwrights of ENGLAND;

Plainly Shewing,

That according to the Amendments, it will Clearly appear to be one of the most Necessary, and Use-fullest Companies in *England. And that the suggestion of a Monopoly is answered -*

IN the Year 1603. the Right Honourable Charles Earl of Nottingham, then Lord High-Admiral of *England*, and Captain-General of the Navy Royal, and the then Commissioners and Principal Officers of the Navy; together with the most Eminent Master Builders and other able and Skilful Master Shipwrights of *England*, Observing the Number of Ships and Vessels of Magnitude were Encreased, and that many Errors, Deceits, and Frauds were used in Building, Repairing, Surveying, and Ad-measuring of them, both in the Crown Service, and in the Service of Merchants; and for these Reasons, and for the better breeding of Able Journey-men more Experienced in the Solid Works of that Art and Mystry, all Persons being Shipwrights and Calkers in *England* and *Wales*, were, by Charter, Incorporated one Entire Company, by the Name of the Master, Wardens, and Commonalty of the Art or Mystry of Ship-wrights of *England*, and Impower'd them to Depute Deputy-Affistants in the Out-Ports, and to live Uniform in Government, and practise their Trade in all the Rivers and Ports of *England* and *Wales*, to Bind and Enroll Apprentices,

A

And

*First good In-
tent of Incor-
porating them.*

And to meet and hold Courts of Consultations, to rectify and Improve the said Trade, and to hear Differences in case of Deceits or Frauds, or any other Irregularities in the Affairs of the said Trade, and to Survey and Admeasure Ships and other Vessells, and to Certifie the same under their Hands, and the Common Seal of the said Company, that they are substantially Firm and Well-built, as well for His Majesty's Service, (if required) as for Merchants.

That in 1612. Upon the Petition of the said Company, That Charter was Renewed with Amendments, and had the same Powers continued; and accordingly 44 General Rules or By-Laws were by them Prepared, approved of, and signed by the then Lords Chief Justices of either Bench.

*Reasons why
the said Com-
pany have not
Executed the
Powers granted
to them.*

That the said Company at the Desire of several Out-Ports in *England* and *Wales*, have formerly deputed Assistants, and for many Years endeavoured to put the Powers granted to them into Execution, but have continually been Impeded by an adverse Party of the same Profession, who shelter themselves in Sea-Port Corporation-Towns, amongst Shop-keepers and other Inland Trades, on pretence of Ancient Custom (as more fully appears by the Map of *New-Castle* herunto annexed,) which they do Weaken and Destroy the said Company of Shipwrights of *England*; hoping thereby to escape Useful Rules of Inspection and Surveys, and to avoid all Regular Methods for the better Government of the said Trade.

That several ineffectual Proposals have been offered to Re-Establish the said Company, and to Renew their By-Laws, and more particularly the 4th of *June*, 1691. The greatest Part of the said Company, with other Skilful and Experienced Master-Shipwrights of *England*, by their Humble Petition, did set forth the Cause and Reason of the many Irregularities of their Trade, that occasioned so great a Want of Experienced Able Journey-men Shipwrights and Calkers, and that those Errors, Deceits and Frauds, in Building, Repairing, Surveying, and Admeasuring of Ships and Vessels, that formerly was Observed and Complained of, were again Revived, and for Redress of the same, 12 New Additional Heads were Proposed, in Order to make the said Company Useful and Practicable; And for the Reasons therein contain'd, as is most humbly Conceiv'd, Her Majesty of Blessed Memory, and the Lords of the most Honourable Privy-Council, were pleased to Refer the said Petition and Proposals, to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, who, for the same Reasons, together with the Commissioners of the Navy and Corporation of *Trinity-House* of *Depsford-Strond*, after a Deliberate Consideration of every Particular Head, reported their Joynt Opinion; That it is for His Majesty's Service, the Advantage of the said Trade, and the Safety and Encouragement of Navigation in General, to Re-Establish the said Company, and that all Persons of the Shipwright's Trade in *England* and *Wales*, be under one Rule and Government.

*Report touching
the Shipwrights
Proposals ap-
proved.*

And the 2d of *March*, 1692. for the same Reasons, (as it is most Humbly Conceiv'd) His Majesty, and the Lords of His Majesty's most Honourable Privy-Council, were pleased to approve of the said Report, and to give the said Company leave to Renew their Charter, according to the said Proposals; Notwithstanding the Order of Council of the 18th of *March* 1685. against the Rule and Interest of the said Company; and in Pursuance thereof, the 13th of *December*, 1693. a Warrant was Prepared, and directed to the then Attorney-General; And a Suggestion or Doubt being raised, touching Contributions; Whereupon the greatest Parts of the Shipwrights of *England* did Pray, that Unnecessary Suggestion might be removed.

*A Second Re-
port, Ditto.*

And accordingly, for the Reasons aforementioned, (as is Humbly Conceiv'd) the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, and the Commissioners of the Navy, the 7th of



of February, 1695. have by a Second Report given their Opinion, That it is for His Majesty's Service a New Charter should be Granted to the Shipwright's Company, Inserting therein the Clause in the aforesaid Warrant. That His Majesty's Ships and Vessels built in his own Yards, pay such Contributions towards the Support of the said Company, and Relief of their Poor, Aged and Cripples, as the said Commissioners think fit to Limit and Appoint; Yet it being very Difficult, and too great an Undertaking to please all Parties in this Affair, neither can it be expected but General Rules will meet with Opposition; Therefore with Submission on the behalf of the said Company, do humbly crave Leave to Explain and Answer these following Objections that have been alledg'd, with some others that may probably be raised, to mislead several Persons into Opinions against the Re-Establishment of a Regular Company of Shipwrights of *England*, as it is now so well affirmed to be in a Practicable and more Useful Method than heretofore, and is hoped will be out of the Power of any Adverse Party whatsoever, to Over-Rule and Destroy it, *viz.*

Objection. What have the Company of Shipwrights of *England*, or any other Person to do with a Ship or Vessel, that We the Owners and Builders agree of our selves by Contract to Build and fit out to Sea, and are contented with the Opinion of an Able Shipwright, that we trust to Survey her whilst a Building; for to follow the Shipwrights of *England*'s General Rules, will be to Monopolize all Bargains and Contracts for Ships, &c. to themselves?

Answer. The Re-Establishing the Shipwrights of *England* to a Regular Company, and to Practise their Trade throughout *England* and *Wales*, cannot be Termed a Monopoly, where the Publick receive so great an Advantage in the better Accommodation of the Necessary Repairs and Works of Shipping; and every Particular Shipwright have the same Freedom, and an equal Encouragement and Benefit in all the Rivers and Ports of *England* and *Wales*; and the Heads in the Old Charter, and the New Heads proposed to amend it, do neither of them require, or any ways oblige the Master, Owners, or Builders to make Bargains or Contracts, for the Ships or Vessels with the said Company, but leaves them to Name what Persons they think fit to make and write their Contracts, and to employ any able Shipwright they please to Survey them whilst a Building, and wholly leaves them to their own Discretion, either to Build a Ship or Vessel, for Burthen or for Sailing, according to the Trade or Design they Build for.

Answer. Showing that it is no Monopoly.

But in regard Contracts for Ships, &c. are not alike to other private Cases in Bargains or Contracts between Man and Man, for that the Lives of his Majesty's Subjects, and Merchants Goods and Estates are also concerned; Therefore, the Consideration of the General Rules, and the filling up of the Blanks in the several Particulars hereafter mentioned, ought more properly to be according to the Opinions of a Majority of the most Knowing and Experienced Master Shipwrights of *England*; and Appealed to, as a Proof, in case of Unjustifiable Errors, Deceits or Frauds in Marine Architecture, rather than be wholly left to the Discretion of the Owners, a Master, and a Builder, who commonly have the Particulars in a Scrivener's Contract for their President, where one Party is for making a Slight Contract, and getting as high a Price as he can, and the other Party having little or no Skill or Judgment in Rules of Building, are for getting the Price as low as they can.

And as to the Master and Owners Reposing Trust in an able Shipwright, to Survey a Ship or Vessel whilst a Building, do with Submission leave it to Judgment, whether

the said able Shipwright will Disoblige the Builders, where his Reputation, Credit, Preferment and whole Livelihood depends, to oblige a Master, and the Owners for a small matter of Wages only, during the time a Ship or Vessel is a Building, or a bare Expectation of a Voyage to Sea in the said Ship.

And Ships or Vessels as are set up and built by the Lump, without Contract or Survey, so Authentick Vouchers between the Buyer and the Seller, as the Rules of the said Company directs, such Ships and Vessels will be much better accepted and esteemed more Valuable than now they are.

Second Objection.

Obj. To have a Regular Company of Shipwrights of *England*, to restrain Vagrants and other Uncapable Persons from practising at the Shipwright's Trade, will make the Want of Shipwrights greater than now they are.

Answer.

Apprentices by the Rules of the Company, to have but one of their time at Sea.

Ans. It is Observed, and evidently Plain at this time, that there is a great Decrease of Able, Experienced Journey-men Shipwrights and Calkers this long War; For as the Breed of them in His Majesty's Yards and Navy Service encrease, the Ships and Vessels in the said Service do also encrease, where a greater extraordinary Number is taken up and employed there; And notwithstanding the said Extraordinary Number that are constantly Employed in the said Service, the Decrease is greater in Merchants Service both at Sea and in all the Rivers and Ports of *England* and *Wales*, and so much are they wanted, that at this present time of Necessity, they are forced to Employ Run-a-ways and other Handicraft Tradesmen, to perform the necessary Works of Marine Architecture; and be the Master-Builders and their Sub Officers never so careful and well Skill'd in their Art and Mystery, yet their Reputation and Ability is oftentimes in Question by employing the said uncapable Persons, who are ill Instruments, and at times of Exigency they are a great Disappointment at Sea and ashore, both in His Majesty's and in Merchants Service.

Dangerous to Employ Vagrants, &c.

And altho it is of dangerous Consequence, to Trust and Employ the said unaccountable Persons in solid Marine Works, with humble Submission, a Proviso may be made, to continue them such a limited time, as may be thought fit and convenient to Breed a more Useful and Deserving Number of Experienced Able Journey-men Shipwrights and Calkers, for that the great Wages given them this long War, is a Considerable Encouragement for Parents to Bind their Children, and for Youths to Bind themselves to the said Trade; from whence, and from the Method and General Rules of a Regular Company, no Evil can probably arise; but on the Contrary, Good and a great Benefit may be perform'd thereby, as well to His Majesty's Service and Merchants, and to the said Trade, as for the Encouragement and Safety of Navigation in general.

Surveys Necessary both in New and Old Ships, &c.

And whereas Surveys are approved of, and reported to be Reasonable and Absolutely Necessary for the Security and Safety of the Lives of His Majesty's Subjects and Merchants, and Owners Goods and Estates, and His Majesty's Customs, and Mariners Wages, and for that the Master-Builders and other Skillful Master Shipwrights of *England*, by their Oath, are obliged to Survey Ships and Vessels according to the General Rules and Ordinances of the said Company, and the best of their Skill and Judgment; and in regard they are often called, and Summoned to Surveys, and do spend much of their time by Attendance both a-Float and a-Shore; Therefore it is approved to be Reasonable, That when the Master, Owners, or Freighters require a Survey, such

such a moderate allowance be Named with respect to the Barthen of the Ship, and Distance of the Place, as may be thought reasonable and fit for a standing Rule for old Ships and Vessels; and that all new Ships and other Vessels of Magnitude, have four Surveys before they be Launched or Floated, whereof the said Company are to Certifie under their Hands and Common Seal, that they are Strong, Firm, and well built, either for the Crown service (if required) or to receive in Merchants Goods for such a Voyage to Sea; and the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, and Commissioners of the Navy, and Corporation of Trinity-House, are pleased to allow and approve of the same, for Surveys on His Majesty's Ships, and for other Ships and Vessels hired into the Service, when the said Commissioners think fit to call Surveys for the said Service.

And for that, no Persons whatsoever are so Knowing, nor so Proper to Rectifie and Improve a Trade, as a Majority of those of the same Profession: And the Practice of making of Contracts for Ships and other Vessels, is the Master, the Owners, and a Builder, who consult together, and the Method in a Scriveners Contract is commonly taken for their Rule and President, where in case of Errors, or Frauds, or the Unjustifiable Performance of Covenants in the said Contract, it is left to a Verbal Survey which is Definitive for want of a Regular Company, who are obliged by their Oath, to Certifie their Opinion according to the General Rules of the said Company, and the best of their Skill and Judgment; and in case an Action at Common Law should happen, it is a more Authentick and much better Testimony.

Now with Submission, the Final Question that ariseth is, Who are the most Proper Persons to be consulted with, to fill up the several Blanks, in the Eighth Head of the Shipwrights of England's Proposals, where a Consideration is to be had, of the Proportioning of the Scantlings, of the Floor-Timbers, the Futtocks, the Top-Timbers, and of the Planks and the laying of them; together with a Sufficient and Serviceable Scarfe to each other, and placing of them in the Frame, with a regard to the Length and Burthen of the Ship or Vessel.

And that the Tree-Nails be of a proportionable size, and of Seasoned young English Oak fit for Service under Water; and that the Bolts and other Iron-work be of a size Proportionable to their Length, and to the Burthen of the Ship or Vessel; and that there be a good Inspection into the well placing of the said Tree-Nails, Bolts and other Iron-work, with a regard to the Timber and Plank, and the part of the Ship or Vessel they are to fasten and secure.

And that a Proportionable number of Threads of Hair, and of White and Black Oakham be appointed to be well Drove and Bottomed in the Seams, agreeable to the thickness of the Plank, and the part of the Ship or Vessel.

That in Squaring of Timber, it be so lined, that the Flat do contain both the Waincs, and that in Converting of Timber into Planks, it be full Lined and cut according to its proper Denomination of Inches, and parts of an Inch.

That is to say, which is the most proper Company, and fittest Persons to consider of the said Materials, and filling up the several Blanks aforementioned.

Whether the Members of the Company of Shipwrights of England Incorporated by Charter, who by Experience have attained to Skill both at Sea and a-shoar, and are known in their Practice, to be eminent in Building and Repairing of Ships and Vessels of Magnitude, both for Tunnage and for Sailing.

Or the Members of the Society or Brotherhood, that style themselves an Ancient Company of *Shipwrights* free of London, and are Experienced in Building Wherrys, Boats, Lighters, Barges, and the like small Craft.

3d Obj. touching Ancient Shipwrights.

Obj. The latter pretend they are a Society or Company of themselves, and do affirm and presume to assert, That they being an Ancienter Company, have judgment in Shipping, and know how to Build and Repair Ships and Vessels of great Burthen, as well as the Members of the Company of *Shipwrights* of England, only say that they want Docks, Wharves, and Stocks; and that they are Freemen of London, and Sworn at Guildhall, and be under the Government of the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen, and therefore they will pay no Respect, nor have any regard to the Rules and Government of the Company of *Shipwrights* of England by Charter.

Answer.

Ans. The Company of *Shipwrights* of England do not Propose to Hinder or Deprive the Brotherhood of Free *Shipwrights* of London, or any other Society or Brotherhood of *Shipwrights* in England or Wales, of the Freedom and Privilege they enjoy in any City or Corporation Town; But on the contrary to accommodate all unnecessary Disputes, and Unite them. For whilst they are separated and divided in their Opinions, grounded upon Slender Notions, Doubts and Jealousies, they are incapable to act or do any good, either for themselves, or for His Majesty's Service.

And it is humbly submitted to Consideration, the taking an Oath (as in this Case) how far it is binding, or ought to be complied with, that requires the Continuance of an Evil Custom of a River, Port, City, or Corporation Town (only for the Benefit and Interest of some few particular Persons) wherein they oblige themselves as much as in them lies (in the practice of their Trade) to maintain and continue a Custom of doing evil against the Weal and Profit of all His Majesty's Marine Traders, and Sea-faring Subjects in England and Wales.

The Adhering to those small Craft shallow notions in Solid Marine works, hath been one great occasion of the weakening and destroying the Company of Shipwrights of England, and the cause of many other disturbances in the said Trade.

It is granted, the said Ancient Society or Brotherhood of Free *Shipwrights* of London, are Qualified to be Consulted with, to give their Opinions at the settling of the said General Rules, for the Firm and well Building of Wherrys, Boats, Lighters, Barges, and the like small Craft, which is a Branch or part of the *Shipwrights* Trade.

And it is owned, there may be Named a small number of the Society or Brotherhood of Free *Shipwrights* of London, that after some years Practice in Ship-Yards, have attained unto Skill and Experience in Building and Repairing Ships and Vessels of Magnitude; and may properly be Consulted with, for their Concurrent Opinion at the filling up of the several

Blanks in the General Rules aforementioned.

But as to the others small craft Ancient *Shipwrights* Free of London, Notwithstanding their bold assertion and Antiquity to the Ancient Name of a *Shipwright*. It is a Paradox how any of them can pretend to understand the Mysterious and weighty concern of Ships and Vessels of Magnitude, or think of being Trusted with Solid Materials in the Works of Marine Architecture. Yet although they are Incapacitated, the Members of the said Company of *Shipwrights* of England do not Impead or Debar them from learning their Trade, but do Employ so many of the said small-craft *Shipwrights*, as are desirous and willing to be Instructed in the Practick part of Solid Work in Ship-Yards, and Trust them in the said Works according as they improve themselves, and pay them Wages agreeable to their Ability and Merit.

And

That the second Head touching the Wages and Graving grounds before *Shipwrights* Yards is approved of.

That the fourth Head touching the Enrollment of Apprentices Indentures is approved of.

That the sixth Head touching Apprentices and Journyemen may not be lyable to be Prest by common Prest-masters to serve as Seamen, whereby His Majesty's Yards and Navy, may from time to time be supplied by the said Company, with able *Shipwrights* and *Caulkers* is approved of.

That the tweluth Head touching the Relief and Maintenance of their Aged and poor disabled Cripples, of which number since the encreate of Ships of great Burthen, there be many objects of pity, who have no Releif save only Parochial Charity is approv'd of.

And that there may be a perfect and true Account of the well Breeding of Experienced able Journyemen *Shipwrights* and *Caulkers*, The 11th Head is approved of, where it is Proposed, That His Majesty and His Royal Successors, may have once a year from the said Company, a Lift or Scheme of the new built Ships and other Vessels, and of the old Ships, &c. that by a Survey are cast and to be broke up, with the number of *Shipwrights* and *Apprentices* in the Rivers and Ports of *England* and *Wales*, which is an Expedient to Consolidate the aforesaid Societies, and to perpetuate a Friendly Correspondence of the *Shipwrights* of *England* together, to perform the Services aforementioned.

Regist' of
Ships and Ship-
wrights, &c.

And forasmuch as several other Societies and Companies of Tradesmen in the Honest and due Execution of whose Callings, Mens Lives and Estates are concern'd (as *Chyrurgions*, *Apothecaries*, *House Carpenters*, *Bricklayers*, &c.) do by Virtue of their Letters Patents of Incorporation, Consult and Advise together from time to time for the Agreeing and Settling amongst themselves, Sundry General Orders or Rules for the better Government and Regulation of their respective Bodies Corporate, as well for the Publick Good and Satisfaction, as for their own particular Information, Credit and Safety, some of which have afterwards been Approved and Confirmed by Subsequent Acts of Parliament.

And in Regard it is Eighty three Years since the General Rules, the Company of *Hitherto no* *Shipwrights* of *England's* Charter have been Considered and Settled; and hitherto there not being any Law or Statute to Encourage and Improve the said Trade, where not only His Majesty's Subjects Estates, but their Lives, and the Welfare and safety of the Navy-Royal is also in a great Measure concerned. And for that the new Heads proposed as Amendments and Additions unto the old Charter, will Justify themselves, and clearly appear to be grounded on sound and good Reasons; And the aforesaid Fact complained of, and desired to be Redressed being true in every particular.

Law nor Statute for the firm and well Building of Ships, &c. And to Encourage and Improve the Trade.

Therefore hope, and do humbly Conceive the same Reasons for renewing the said Charter will be good for a Bill to pass in Parliament to Establish and Confirm it, in Order to make the said Company Practicable by them, and their Deputy-Assistants in all the Rivers and Ports of *England* and *Wales*, according to the first Intent of Incorporating them, which is so well Approved of and Affirmed to be of use and Service as aforesaid, together with the Opinions and Consent of the greatest part of the most eminent Master Builders of *England*, who have Subscribed to the same, according to the President of their Ancestors aforementioned.

